



MEDIA RELEASE

Memorial Day Weekend at the Santa Barbara Airport

SANTA BARBARA, CA – May 23, 2013

Memorial Day weekend marks the beginning of the summer travel season and is traditionally one of the busiest travel periods of the year. Santa Barbara Airport expects Airport traffic to be heaviest on Thursday and Friday (May 23 - 24) and Tuesday (May 28).

Every Memorial Day visitors frequent two distinctive World War II Memorials located at the Santa Barbara Airport. Wreaths will be placed at both memorials in remembrance of the men and women who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

The first memorial, dedicated in 1948, is located in front of the Airport Administration Building at 601 Norman Firestone Road. A distinctive propeller from a Chance Vought F4U Corsair aircraft is a poignant reminder of the Marine Corps Air Station Santa Barbara and the men and women who served there during World War II. Its plaque states, "This Airport is dedicated to the memory of the pilots and air crews of the United States Marine Corps trained at this station who gave their lives to the country. Semper Fidelis. May 5, 1948."

The second memorial, dedicated in May 2010, is located at the east end of the Airline Terminal Long Term Parking Lot on James Fowler Road. Designed as a place for reflection, the memorial's black granite obelisk and benches are flanked by olive trees and interpretive signage. The memorial lists the names of 49 local aviators who gave their lives during World War II and the Marine Corps Squadrons that served at the Santa Barbara base. Etched on the memorial are words from General Douglas MacArthur on the occasion of the Surrender Ceremony, September 2, 1945, "It is my earnest hope and indeed the hope of all mankind that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past -- a world founded upon faith and understanding -- a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish -- for freedom, tolerance and justice.

Visitor access to the memorials is convenient and parking is free at both locations.

Twentieth century history of the Santa Barbara Airport shows it was quickly transformed in 1942 by the U.S. government from a sleepy local airport to a Marine Corps Air Station to support national defense. The Marines eventually constructed 103 buildings and installed about 5.5 million square feet of pavement on the site which included the present day Airport and much of the land that is now the University of California at Santa Barbara. Soon after development began, Marine fighter and bomber pilots started advanced training in preparation for combat in the Pacific. Pilots were assigned to squadrons where they trained primarily in Corsair fighters, or Dauntless and Avenger bombers. By 1944, over 400 Women Reserves were assigned to the Station performing administrative, communications, maintenance, vehicle driving, and pilot ground training. At the War's end the U.S. Government handed the Airport, additional land, and the improvements back to the City of Santa Barbara for use as a municipal airport. In 1948 Santa Barbara City Council honored local WWII aviators by naming Airport streets after many of those who lost their lives in the service to their country.

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